

March 12, 2018

Legislative Office Building
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Opposition to HB 5447

Dear Education Committee and Legislators,

I am writing this letter in opposition to bill HB 5447 – An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Auditors of Public Accounts Concerning Private Providers of Special Education. My name is Solandy Forte. I live in Milford, Connecticut. I am a parent, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and a Licensed Behavior Analyst providing services to children with special needs in the state of Connecticut.

The bill HB 5447 in consideration fails to acknowledge the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) a federal law that requires public schools to develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that meets the **unique** needs of the student. While public schools are responsible for creating an IEP for students they are not always able to meet the unique needs of all students within the public school setting and as a result must seek a change in placement for these students or consult with related service providers who specialize in working with students with complex learning needs outside of the public school setting. In these cases the individuals working within private placements or providing related services have received specialized training that has put them in a position to deliver high quality educational instruction across all domains of need which addresses the unique needs of children not otherwise able to receive these services within the public school setting.

If this bill passes, children with special needs, families, and their educational teams will be limited to accessing services from a much smaller pool of providers of which may not have the necessary training to target the unique needs of the individual student who requires a rigorous educational program where programming is run with integrity by qualified staff in order to meet their individualized needs. The proposed bill denies children with special needs access to a placement and/or related services that can be designed and delivered by qualified professionals to ensure that an ambiguously appropriate IEP is implemented with fidelity.

I am OPPOSED to bill HB 5447 and am urging Education Committee Members and Legislators not pass this bill.

Thank you,

Solandy Forte
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